

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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R 281300Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9690

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY PARIS

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 5085

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PFOR, LA, US

SUBJECT: RENEWED PATHET LAO CONCERN RE COUP PLOTTING

REF: VIENTIANE 5084

SUMMARY. IN CALL RE GIBSON CASE REPORTED REFTTEL, PHOUMI VONGVICHIT WENT INTO LENGTHY DISCUSSION OF CONTINUED COUP PLOTTING, SPECIFICALLY SEPARATION OF SOUTH, AND ANTI-PGNU-SOUVANNA SENTIMENTS AMONG "RIGHTISTS" AND ARMY OFFICERS. IT FINALLY APPEARED HIS RENEWED CONCERN STEMMED FROM RECENT MEETING OF SENIOR MILITARY IN SAVANNAKHET. I REAFFIRMED US POLICY OF SUPPORT FOR PGNU AND ASSURED HIM THAT WE HAD HEARD NOTHING OF COUP PLOTTING. RECALLED AMBASSADOR'S REQUEST THAT WE BE INFORMED OF ANY CONCRETE INFORMATION THAT CAME TO HIS ATTENTION. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THIS BUT INSISTED WE LOOK INTO RUMOURS AND DO WHAT WE COULD TO DISCOURAGE ALL ANTI-PGNU SENTIMENT. DECLARED PATHET LAO FIRMLY WEDDED TO PGNU AND NATIONAL RECONCILIATION. END SUMMARY.

1. AS ARRANGED, I MET PHOUMI THIS AFTERNOON IN SUR-
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PRISINGLY LONG BUT CORDIAL 45 MINUTE DISCUSSION.

INITIALLY I MENTIONED RETURN OF AMBASSADOR WHITEHOUSE JULY 3; EXPRESSED PLEASURE THAT AGREEMENT JUST RECEIVED FOR NEW LAO AMBASSADOR TO U.S. KHAMPAN PANYA; AND EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR HIS RECEIVING REPRESENTATIVE MONTGOMERY ON JULY 4, INDICATING THAT CONGRESSMAN WAS SOLELY INTERESTED IN POW/MIA AND THAT HE WAS ALSO SEEKING GO TO HANOI.

2. AFTER DISCUSSING GIBSON CASE REPORTED REFTTEL, HE PICKED UP MY COMMENT THAT U.S. POLICY REMAINED TO SUPPORT PGNU AND TO WORK COOPERATIVELY WITH GOVERNMENT, BUT THAT SUCH INCIDENT NOT HELPFUL. HE WENT ON, AT LENGTH AND IN RATHER DIFFUSED MANNER, ABOUT FACT THERE CONTINUED TO BE RUMOURS OF COUP PLOTTING; "RIGHTISTS" AND MILITARY OFFICERS REMAINED DISSATISFIED WITH ACCORDS AND EXPRESSED ANTI-PGNU AND ANTI-SOUVANNA SENTIMENTS; THERE HAD BEEN TALK OF SOUTHERN SEPARATIST MOVEMENT; HE HAD HEARD OF TWO THAI BATTALIONS MOVING ACROSS RIVER; IT HAD ALSO BEEN SAID THAT "CIA" FOLLOWED INDEPENDENT POLICY AND THAT U.S. PURSUED TWO COURSES.

3. AT VARIOUS POINTS I INTERSPERSED THIS FLOW BY REMARKS RECALLING AMBASSADOR'S STATEMENT TO HIM THAT HE SHOULD BRING ANY CONCRETE INFORMATION ON COUP PLOTTING TO OUT ATTENTION; REAFFIRMING U.S. POLICY AND ASSERTING ALL RESPONSIBLE LAO KNEW OUR POSITION; REASSURING HIM HE HAD HEARD OF NO COUP PLOTTING; AND EXPRESSING DOUBTS ANY GROUP WOULD CARRY OUT COUP IN FACE OF KNOWLEDGE THEY WOULD GET NO U.S. SUPPORT. FINALLY, IT CAME OUT. HE HAD IT FROM RELIABLE SOURCE THAT SENIOR MILITARY HAD MET AT SAVANNAKHET AND HAD HELD POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS DURING WHICH MUCH DISSATISFACTION WITH PGNU WAS EXPRESSED. I TRIED PUT MEETING IN PERSPECTIVE, SAYING I KNEW OF IT, UNDERSTOOD IT WAS REGULAR, PERIODIC MEETING AND HAD DISCUSSED PROFESSIONAL MILITARY MATTERS. I DID NOT KNOW OF POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS AIMED AGAINST PGNU. HE THEN RESUMED MONOLOGUE THAT PATHET LAO HAD KEPT NATION ABOVE PARTY INTERESTS. IT HAD NOT FORMED GOVERNMENT IN SAM NEUA, EVEN THOUGH SOME PRESSED TO DO SO, BUT SOUPHANOUVONG AND HE HAD RESISTED. IF PATHET LAO HAD FORMED GOVERNMENT, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN MOST DIFFICULT TO FORM PGNU. "CERTAIN
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ELEMENTS" ON VIENTIANE SIDE ALSO HAD TO SET ASIDE THEIR INTEREST AND THINK FIRST OF LAOS. FINALLY, HE SAID WE HAD TO WORK TOGETHER AND KEEP EACH OTHER INFORMED ON PLOTTING AGAINST PGNU. THERE WAS MUCH WORK TO BE DONE TO DEVELOP LAOS AND THE COUNTRY WOULD CONTINUE TO NEED OUR AID.

4. COMMENT: THERE WAS MEETING LAST WEEK OF SENIOR FAR OFFICERS AT SAVANNAKHET. SUCH MEETINGS PERIODIC AND

NORMALLY HELD IN VIENTIANE. GENERALS HAVE NOW DECIDED TO HOLD THEM IN DIFFERENT CITIES. AT SAVANNAKHET, OFFICERS DID DISCUSS POLITICAL SITUATION EXTENSIVELY BUT THRUST WAS NOT ANTI-SOUVANNA OR ANTI-PGNU, BUT WAS INSTEAD POSITIVE DISCUSSION OF HOW VIENTIANE SIDE COULD GET BETTER ORGANIZED. PHOUMI'S VISIBLE CONCERN ILLUSTRATES ONCE MORE HOW PATHET LAO'S POOR INTELLIGENCE REVERBERATES WITHIN THEIR PARANOIAC FRAME OF MIND.
CHAPMAN

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